Songs for the Witch Woman

by

John W Parsons

to

Candida

"In Whom she is Incarnate"

Witch Woman

I hear your voice low in the dusk
Like the notes of the harp player
That carve the still air
Into a sensuous and subtle imagery of sound

And my senses are drowned
By the scent of oleander and the musk
Of the datura dimly shining in the dark,
While your voice troubles the still air,

And I recall
An ancient garden and a secret call
And ~~you were~~ your slant eyes and your red hair
Engender dreams of days beyond despair

And under your sorcery I fare forth
To fabulous lands and meadows green with Spring
And caught on the gossamer web of evening
I behold incredible things no poet ever told.

Night

Subtle and amorous
Lamia sings her love song on the evening
As is heard the alien, dubious song of the night bird
Or the purr of the lioness
On the damp, lambent dark
Or the soft disastrous word
Of murder following the extinguished spark
Into nothingness.

Allwhile the subject of her langorous caress
Dreams darkly dreams
As voyaging Deathward, the transfigured Swan
Sings splendrous sad things,
Drifts deeply down and meets, with folded wings
The jewelled night
Or as the noon bright, desert sun dreams down
Into the smiling, upturned remnant of a face

A knife is beautiful, a jaguar
In motion is the embodiment of grace
And ~~shortly~~ slowly in the guest house in evening
I dream afar,

Seeking forbidden things on a black star
while ,throatily Lamia sings
~~Her strange caress.~~ Her strange caress.

As strum the stirring crotali (?)
As the leopardess doth sing,
As does the vulture,strident, cry,
So does ~~Lam-~~ Lamia strum and sing and cry
As wanton as the setting of a star
In an ensanguined sea.

Dear dreadful dark,
Lean over me and press
The curtain of your awesome tenderness
Against my mind,
Mother of stars, the secret of your vast maternity
In the infinity
Of the deep scented terror of the night
As echoes long
Lamia's doubtful song.

The Pool

I followed a lonely way
I followed a drifting star
And following ever, a beast behind,
But the star was far and far.

I left the cozy coral,
I left the comfortable land
To seek a dream in the dreamy sky
And a skirling song unheard.

I found a wonderful flower
That mirrored the dream in the air.
I reached to gather the flower in
For my close curling hair

And a little spotted snake
Struck from the golden bud ....
I followed a lonely way
With poison in my blood.

I walked a dreadful way
In the jungle,sick and blind
With aquiet laughter overheard (viz ? overhead)
And a monstrous beast behind

At last I turned at bay
On the narrow way I trod
And screamed aloud at what I saw,
For lo,the beast was God!

With the eyes of a laughing girl
And the flower in his hair
And the spotted snake about his throat
And his face was cruel and fair.

Pan

Do not lament thus, who have known and lost me
With pale pastels and sounds of tuneless lyres,
I was the amber girl when you first found me,
The golden boy in the portal of new desires,
I was the wind of Spring, the scent of roses,
I was the night, the garden and I the fire,
The rod that wakes, the flower that disposes,
I the ~~immortal singer~~, the song, the lyre.

immortal singer

I am the Autumn now, my winds are blowing
Blossoms of Summer barrenly they blow
Leaves and desires and summer hopes foreknowing
I shall be Winter and silence of the snow.

Still I am thine, O stricken heart to follow
Past gale and glacier, where I brood alone,
Exultant, where all hopes and fears are hollow,
The core of steel within the heart of stone.

I, who am black and bleak with old disasters,
Was I not beautiful, and am I now the less
Than all the pale and pure and pretty masters
That leave you now upon my wilderness?

Then will you dare me, stinking and sardonic
Who called me, soft and lovely, by my name?
Embrace me then and feel my kiss demonic
Shatter the glacier and reveal the flame.

Stonehenge

The summer thunder chatters in the west
As though
The ghost of Caesar's iron legions go
Behind the hills.

The ancient oaks are shadowy and still,
The mistletoe
Subservient in the argent of the glow
Of moonlight, waits the golden sickle's whim will.
The woods await the thaumaturgic tune
That called the old gods beneath a younger moon,
And will await until the gods come back.
I know ~~they will return~~
They will return, who, going, left the slow
Still circle broken and the altar black.

The Garden

There is a garden where Death has gone to sleep ;...
Dark Death like a pale tired boy nods dreamily,
For he is enamored of her and doth keep her luminous blossoms
forever from decay.
There in the dusky day, in the dim air
Dreams, like disturbing notes from a secret song
Simmer and float between beauty and despair
In an ecstasy no heart endured for long.
Hit to this golden garden all loves come,
Young lovers, happening on eternity
Where dark Death sleeps and dreams,
There venturing some
Are briefly raised beyond desire or pity,
Raised to a pitch of beauty unendured
By faint mortality, where sobbing shakes the
Garden's subtle silence, that immured
Sleep, from which inhuman labyrinth
Death awakes.

Danse (sic)

The night, a huge bleak panther flecked with stars,
Uneasily allows the warm west wind's caress.
The moon, disasterous golden banner,
Slightly smiles.

Off stage, an orchestra complains of love,
Center, a sad-faced ape in clown costume dances slow stately circles.
A werewolf, left, sings raucously a horrible small song,
While, right, a vampire, fondling a skull is also smiling.
Alto saxaphone in orchestra (sings)
"My love, my love, my love."

Werewolf (sings)
"Oh moon, oblique and smiling sinister,
Oh bloody promise in the sky,
Oh beautiful dancer mine,
Betrothed, beloved — "
(He howls)
(Saxaphone) "My love, my love, my love)"
(Were wolf) " Rot flesh and go down Kingdom to a sunken jellied sea
Where black stars and wicked women
Reel in infamy".
The vampire, smiling still, regards the skull,
Which vocalizes in a rich deep baritone.
(Skull) "Believe me if all those enduring young charms, etc"

The ape continues dancing.

(Were wolf)
"O, night of stars that coriscate like semen spated in the womb of night -
O serpent women smiling sinister -
O, lovely dancer at the feast to be - "
(Saxaphone) , "my love, my love, my love".

Sorcerer

I see him tread a craggy path
Over dark hills, outlined against the sky,
In flapping coak, and his sardonic eye
Gleams with a joyous wrath

And he lifts his arms and behold
A flight of birds all gold
In the sunset carrying dreams,
strange dreams from out of Africa and Spain.

Then in a harsh voice he spells the sun
And leaps and dances on its crimson touch (? tomb),
Casting distorted shadows on the moon ~~new risen.~~—
New risen.

I see him flinging out his cloak,
That swells and swirls like thick smoke,
That rushes outwards and expands
To engulf the houses in all lands.

Now, naked on the highest peak,
He pauses with both hands above his head,
He laughs and flings them outward with all his might
And sows a million stars upon the night.

Under the Hill

Now while the sky is apple green
And the wind is still and the moon is ripe,
Come to the hollow under the hill
While the night is young and the evening's thrills
To the thump of drums and the ~~strain of strange~~— strum of strings
And the shrill cry of the pipe.

A girl and a goat are dancing there
In the hollow under the hill.
The goat is black and the girl is fair,
But his eyes are gold as her flying hair,
With the thump of drums and the strum of strings
And the shrill cry of the pipe.

His eyes are yellow and patient and wise
As a snake is patient, a sage is wise,
But the golden girl has a demon's eyes
As she dances and smiles in his golden eyes
To the thump of drums and the strum of strings
And the shrill cry of the pipe.

Narcissus

Drug me with drugs
Slow acting, sensuous, sweet,
Co-mingle gin and musk,
Hashish and amber,
Let me drink and breathe
And hear slow, devious music

Until aroused
To subtle, langorous moods,
Until I see
Ochre and mazarine and purple
Emit lascivious sounds

Then I shall go
Through dark and gothic ruins,
Grey and golden mists
Down to a forest ,-Green coeval, green
Green- With an old dream

I shall go naked
And magnolia and oleander
Datura and jasmine,
Whose blossoms will open and vaginally flower
In infinite time, for a relative house,
Whose white, subliminal fowers
Will caress my breasts

And I shall perfume perform stately
Phallic arabesques
In the moonlight,
Pale and white

Aztec

In a far place, in a dry land
Where skull face with clawed hand
Beats Death Drums.

In a high place, in a far land
Where beak face with stone knife
Draws thin lines on taut chest
Where hot life beats Death Drums

In a red place, where a red sun
Is blood red , and a damned race
Hear skull face beat Death Drums

And each face is skull face
And spit runs from sharp mouth
In a dead sun and the hot drought
Is done Death Drums

In a red rain, in a red feast, in a red pain
Where a red breast with a skull face
Beats Death Drums
Death Drums
Death Drums

Sabat

Ah, the horned moon
Smiles in the purple sky.
Not And more obliquely sly
Show Than your sly smiling, sister.

See the ebon goats'
Wise, dubious yellow eyes

No more wildly wise
Than your wild, wise eyes, sister.

Hark, muted drum
Beats in the woods below
And what (sic) the lightsthat go
Incessant too and fro.

Starsthey have ~~cua-c-ught~~ caught, sister,
And their eyes,
Like yours,
Yellow and wise.
Shall a hill the altar be,
And what the chalice cup ?
What incense offered up,
And what the altar fire.?

The altar shall be white
As your white body, ~~sister~~ sister
The chalice cup is red
As your mouth, sly smiling,

Brighter blood and dark~~desire~~ desire
Shall feed the altar fire.

Punch

Light and airey, bright and fairy
In the glade -- how she whirls
Like a paragon of girls,
On the strings, gossamer things,
Leading upward to the wings
In the boughs
Worked by long inhuman fingers,
Watched by sly ,inhuman eyes,
Eyes of spiders watching flies.

Right foot forward, left foot back,
Flashing curls and dainty face,
Like a little painted death,
Now he spies her, draws his breath,
Tiptoes closer, stares enwrapt,
Reaches out essaying hands -
Jerks the strands.

Downn, down, dreadful down
On the unsuspecting clown,
Clicking fangs and fearful screams
And silence, and thereafter -
Long, long laughter.

Merlin

Red bearded Barbarossa sleeps
In Traumfells (sic) ,where the raven keeps
His sentinelship, nor yet
Is Roland from his tower come,
Nor Arthur back from Avalon.

The hours darken and the yeare

The hours darken and the years
Grow black with evil things
And mad machines spawn monstrous fears
That follow sleep with sombre wings.

The sword lies dreaming in the stone
Neath waters over Avalon.
I would there were one man to tell
The evil dream, the darkling hell,
To seize the sword, to raise the spell.

Then England's mighty oaks would sing,
The mistletoe beneath the bough moon,
Would glow and chant the Druid rune,
The spirit of the corn
Would walk, and greet the morn.

Arcadia

The wood is a tumult of shouting and laughter
And over the valleys and in the sky
I hear your piping and follow after.
I
I see the rioting clouds go by.

Your hair is a banner for rally of rainbows,
The wind is a tame wolf with your rollicking sheep,
splendor Lordor of sunbursts are sheaves for your arrows shafts
And meadows marshall and march at your feet.

Flower and feather and fur in wonder
Follow your stride to the singing sea
And ocean greets you with murmur and thunder,
With swell of billow and shimmer of lea.

Then striding to mountains with sunset flaming
A radiant brand in your flaming hair,
With fire and purple, I see you taming
The wrath of winter, the fury of air.

Autumn

If all my words were stars on silver strings,
Oceanic jewels, or from the well
Of my heart's blood, there are some things
Of which I could not tell, could never tell.

OI could not tell how autumn sadness stirs
Sear memories and balked desires half known,
Or how the summer moon, behind old fire
Smiles secretly, triumphant and alone.

Or, how far mountains move majestically
In evening shadows when the embers die,
Or why the night is still, or of the free
High tumult of wild geese in the sky.

space → Or where dead loves go, or the leaves that blow
Down drifting winds to other lands than these,
Of songs of summer isles and silent snow
And dim disasters under sullen seas.
~~least could I tell you what is in my mind,~~

Least could I tell you what is in my mind
Seeing your face on mist I half forget,
Halh hope,rememberingthe wind
Stirring your hair to flames of old regret.

Farewell, Unknown

Remembered, faraway
Or near at hand, forgot
You were in every land
Wher I am not.

Of see I see you walk the wind
Like abanner flying
Where the sun sets,with the day
And the summer dying.

Lips,hair and lovely limbs
Eyes I called you
Flashing the desperate message
I never knew.

You are on all roads now
I have not taken,
With allremembered things
Lost or forsaken.

With the stars and the hills
And the geese that go
And all thnigs I haveloved
And do not know.

Beloved,I have not known
That I knew so well,
Being both mine and alone,
Unknown, farewell.

Passion Flowers

Where are you going,Mother,Mother
By the dark wood stream
Where wolfbane grows and deadly clover
And the owls eyes gleam

I am gathering simples,son, my love
And flowers for memories of my daughter
A handful of ashes is all they cover
But they will suffice for those that taught her.

Why do you gather monkshood chilly
And hellebore and laurel cherry
When shew as as fair as the valley lilly
And her hair as red as the rowan berry?

Three times shecalled on Satan,lover
In the public squere, in the red fire light
But once for vengence to me, her mother,
The herbs I gather will serve,tonight.

King David

Not for the sorry carrion that was laid
Bleeding before Judeah for a whore -
Beloved prostitute, nor for the lew lustful dust
That smiles no more on my carved bed.

Not for the eight left hanging until rain
Washed down the anger of a righteous god
For Ahab's lamentatation for her sons
Or Michals golden harvest gone to weed

Not for these dirtied hands, this blooded robe
This beard blown away in the winds of time
Nor for the sudden lightning long lost
In alien thunder on the distant hills.

Not even for the tall and headstrong man son
Scowling and dark and beutiful, that lay
Sprawling in blood upon the Hebran (sic) plain/
But for one thing, a young man's face
Under mad eyes that guessed, but never spoke.

Neurosis

O pale face, dreaming in the dark
Master of webs and silences
Amid luxurious blossoms of the night
Where ghostly long limned spiders slowly stalk
And reach up dubious feelers to your eyes
Serenely closed.

Festoons of dim evasions by a dark lagoon
Half truths that fatten on a secret life
And take weak wings and wander with the wind
Gone seeking/
Old lovliness (sic) overgrown with gaudy molds
Lost powers, like trunks of blasted trees
Old songs gone hollow hollow in an empty house
Forsaken.
A shutter slowly opens on the wind
And something sly looks out and is afraid
Afraid
~~A shutter~~
Overcoming tokens of a murdered spring deep buried
A pale distorted face upon the night
Master of webs and silences and lies
The night moths flutter around it like a bloom
Slow closing.

Bierce

And now bitterly
I look upon God
Ialda baoth
Ironic, vengeful and grotesque

He calls himself Pancho Villa
But I know him

Who set Halpin Fraser
Gnawing his mother's bones in a graveyard
And I am caught up into heaven alive
Cursing.

Harpocrates

How craftily does this pale ~~sap~~ apt aspire
To snare a god in web of memory
And weave from incest an oblique desire
~~For an ephemeral~~
For an ephemeral nervement's (? moment's) immortality

Out of failed ~~loves~~, dead loves, dreams gone awry
Like some sea creature leaving halls of shell
He builds so beautifully the gods must envy
Monuments to his fear of ghosts and Hell

Seeking, forever seeking out of season
In every future solace for the past
And in a moment's trance transcending reason,
He shall not last, but shall himself outlast.

From unbreached lonliness (sic) his soul goes winging
To undreamed heavens or and (sic) an unknown doom
Against the heedlessness I hear him singing
Deep in the darkness of a little loom.

Lesbians

I suppose I should hate you, whose red mouths are sullen
And whose eyes look upon one contemptuously,
Save that I have known the pain and sadness
Of lust for that which cannot be.
Yes, I have known unbridled lust and madness,
A passion for the passionless caress,
For the moon's fire and the grey ocean's gladness
And the incredible flower in the ice wilderness.

Therefore I love you, sisters in damnation,
Whose loves, more cruel and tender than my own,
In soft melodious songs make incantations
That call the goddess from the Icnian sea foam.

Night Song

I saw a gypsy going
Into a factory
A red flower going
On a black river flowing
Down into hell.

I heard a strange song rising
Out of a prison
A star rising
And yearning and burning
Out of a tomb.

Oh gipsy going
Flower flowing
Star glowing
What doon ? (sic)

The Witch House

I have strayed in a forest enchanted
Where bale (sic) fire glows
And followed a face, witch haunted
The mad moon knows

I have come to the hostelry of poets
To the Sylvan's (sic) home
Where angels and shadows foregather
In black ~~sakr~~ foam.

Yes, where corpse lights flicker
And witch fires burn
And the past unbearably nostalgic
Looms in a dream

Here in the darkness suspended
From the heaven that was and is ended
And the heaven to be
What phantoms I see.

Winged demons like kings in a story
Set empires before me
And princesses woo me and witch queens pursue me
In castles of glass,
And the panoplies pass ...
And I struggle with spectres and cobwebs -
I speak with the moon
And slyly my shadow behind me
Is weaving a doom.
And death, like the tick of a clock in a boarded up room
Whispers circle and circle and circle forever too late and too soon.

Untitled

I remember
When I was a star
In the night
A moving, burning ember
Amid the bright
Clouds of star fire
Going deathward
To the womb.

Oh moon
Red moon of my desire
My sisters and my others (sic) fire
Down the great hall of heroes
I the star seed
Wooed the incredible flower

I alone
My need, my power
attained ~~a~~tained the dark house
and my bride
~~I remember~~
I remember
When I was a god

In my hour
and like a god I died
By the deep waters, ~~crucified~~
Crucified.

And I dreamed
and the great powers
moved over me
and a voice cried

Go free, star, go free
Seek the dark home
On the wild sky
Good by, star, good by.

Songs of for the Witch Woman. Poems by John W Parsons written from 1947 to 1952 J W P was born in 1914 and died in 1952. Typed from copies made in the hands of Kenneth Anger and Cameron Feb 25 1962.

ARCANUM DCCLXXV
(The Ritual of the Shrine)

1. The Adept, removing his sandals, shall approach the Shrine in a mood of reverence
2. He shall kneel and invoke the lunar Gods (and enter the door of the lunar temple)
3. He shall invoke the Gods of Wisdom
4. He shall become inflamed with adoration
5. He shall evoke the star of Light
6. ~~He shall worship both the shrine and star~~ He shall receive the power of heaven
7. He shall worship the shrine and star
8. He shall see the face of God
9. He shall rule over the animals and the elements
10. He shall receive the blessings of Light.